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MODERN ALPHABETS

BY MELBERT B. CARY, JR.
PRESIDENT, CONTINENTAL
TYPEFOUNDERS ASS'N, INC.

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FIRST EDITION

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Editor's Note

THOSE students who are connected with advertising agencies or the production and design of publicity may wish added information concerning the types shown in this book, their countries of origin, the names of their designers, and which of them are obtainable in the United States. Most of the types here shown are either already part of the equipment of the leading printers and composition houses or can be readily secured by them. We shall be glad to secure definite information concerning any series in which you may be interested.

Inquiries may be addressed either to BRIDGMAN PUBLISHERS *or direct to the* CONTINENTAL TYPEFOUNDERS ASSOCIATION, INC., *of 216 East Forty-Fifth Street, New York City, who have imported all the types shown in this book. They can also furnish upon demand the names and addresses of those printers or composition houses in your own locality who possess any particular type face in which you may be interested.*

BRIDGMAN PUBLISHERS

INTRODUCTION

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FROM time to time attempts have been made to select a best possible letter for printing. As early as 1529 Geofrey Tory laid down specifications for an ideal alphabet based, fantastically, on the measurements of the human body. One hundred and sixty-three years later Louis XIV of France established a royal commission to determine the essentials of a perfect design and then cut the type. The result, achieved after fifty-three years of labor, was the famous *Romain du Roi*, but despite its merit no noticeable reduction in the number of other type designs was effected. More recently in England an exceedingly formal and distinguished committee, appointed by the Medical Research Council, conducted an elaborate and learned investigation into the comparative legibility of several representative type faces. The record of the experiments fills 123 pages, replete with tables and statistics. The concrete results, however, may be summarized by the following paragraph, which appears under the caption "Conclusions:"

"The hypothesis is here put forward that extremely large typographical differences must be present before it

is possible to say that there is any difference in the objective legibility of types. Of types more slightly differentiated it is impossible to say that one is objectively more legible than another. Such types will be 'legible' according as they suit the psychological make-up of the reader. Hence the most legible type, in this subjective sense, is unlikely to be the same for all readers."

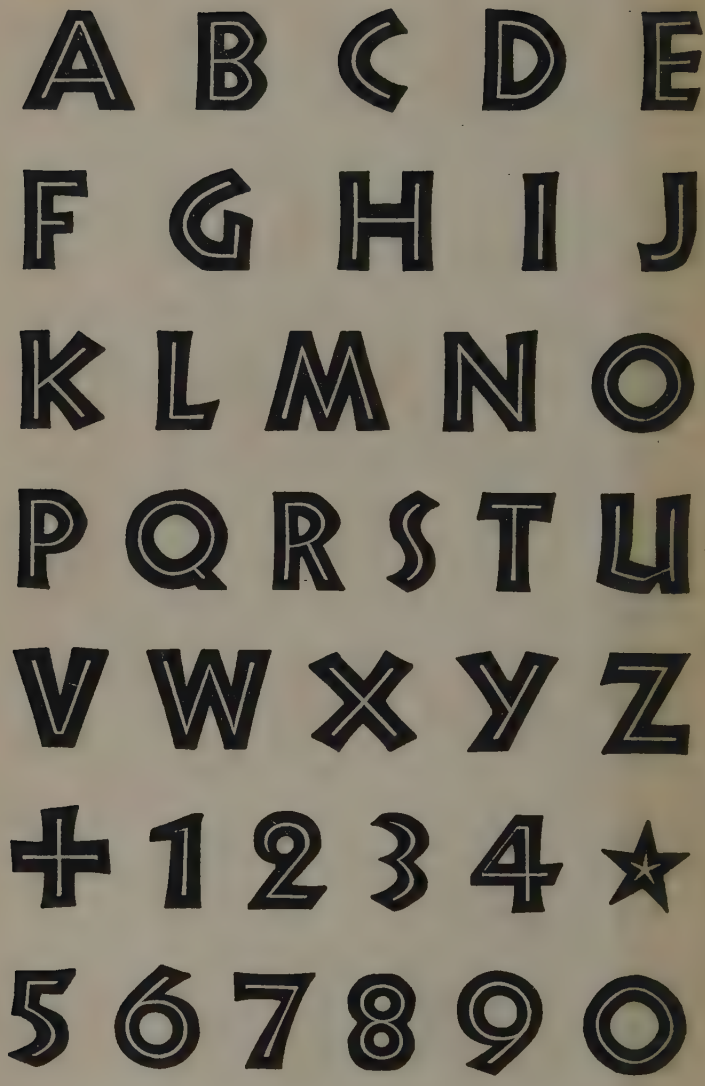
The reason for a lack of unanimity of opinion as to what constitutes a perfect type face is evident. There is no *summum bonum* of type design. There is no one best face, superior to all others, a conclusion equally true of all works of art and obvious from the beginning.

There have continued to be produced, therefore, by the calligraphers of the world, innumerable letter designs. Most are poor and soon perish. Some are good, or fill a particular commercial need. These attain commensurate popularity. There remain a very few superlatively fine designs. These gain recognition wherever the roman alphabet is used. The faces which have been selected for reproduction on the pages following have been chosen from the last two groups. They present a comprehensive picture of the best contemporary designs of Europe.

The largest contribution is from Germany, where some particularly interesting work is being done. This is at least partially because German designers have not been brought up in the tradition of the roman letter and so attack the problem with more freedom and a fresher point of view. Perhaps the most distinguished text letter from abroad,

however, comes from Holland. This is the Lutetia, in which this introduction is composed.

It should be added that the burden of selection of a type face for a given piece of work is a serious one. The specification of a sound design is not enough. A good type for display is not a good text letter. Responsibility here rests squarely on the user, not the designer. A careful study of the following pages will, however, serve to acquaint the student with some of the best Continental designs in both text and display categories.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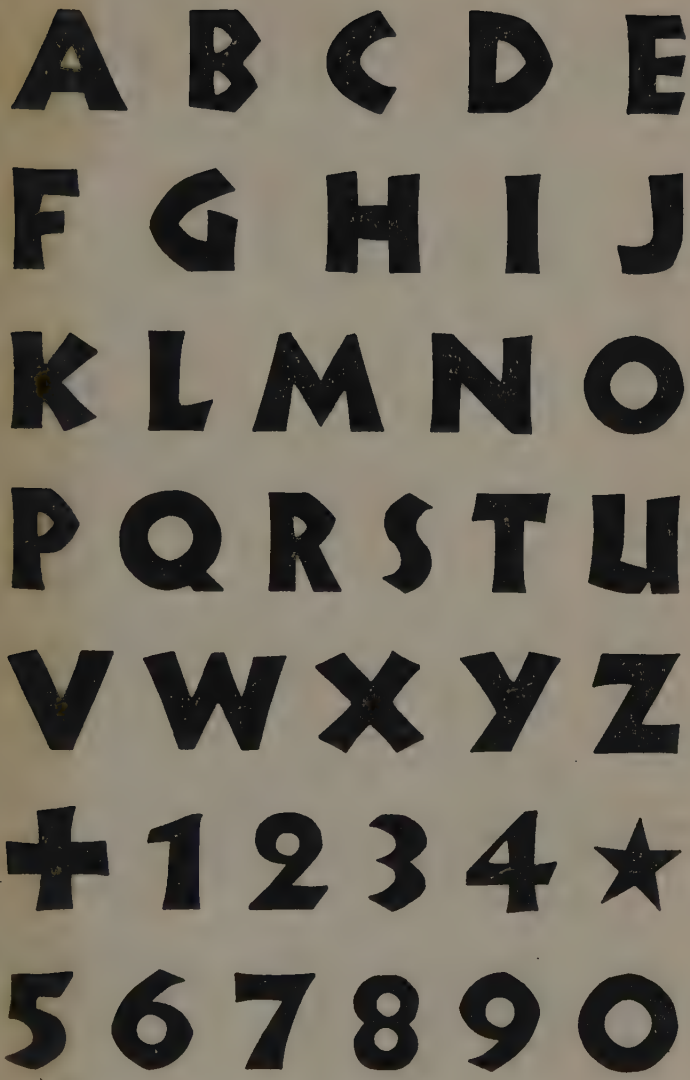
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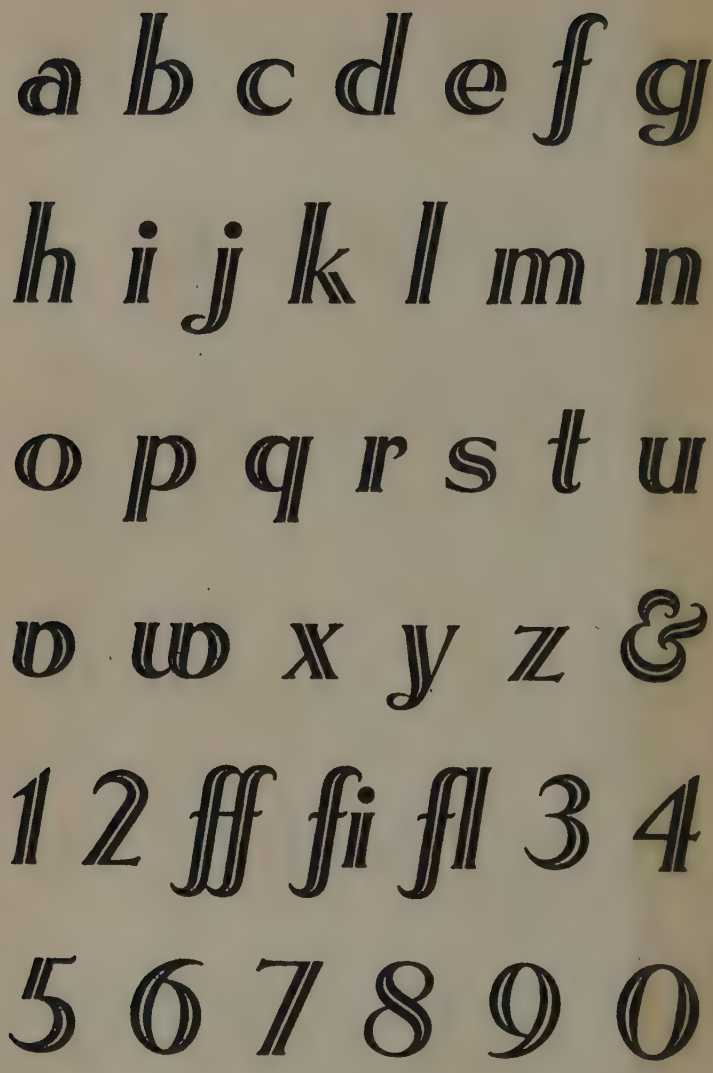
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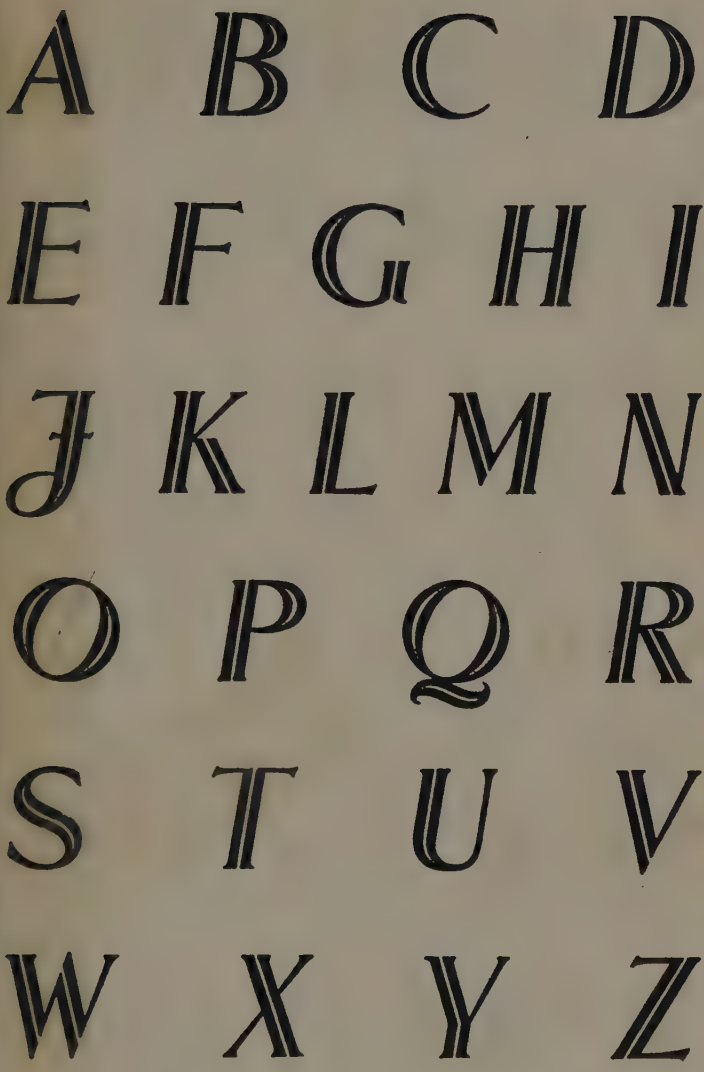
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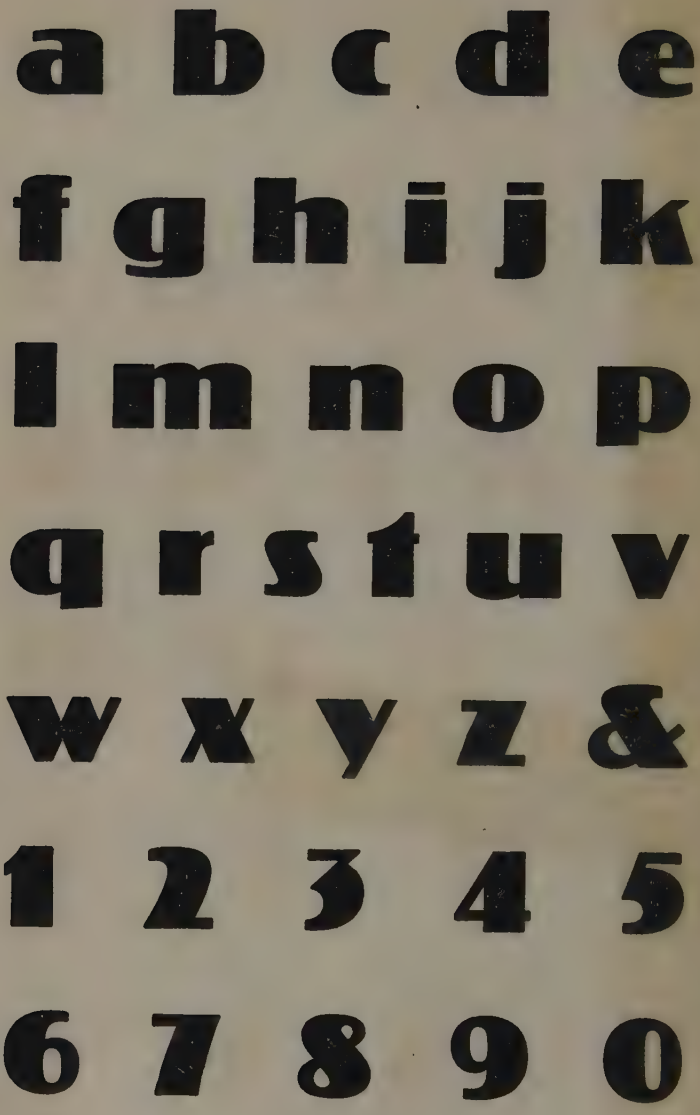
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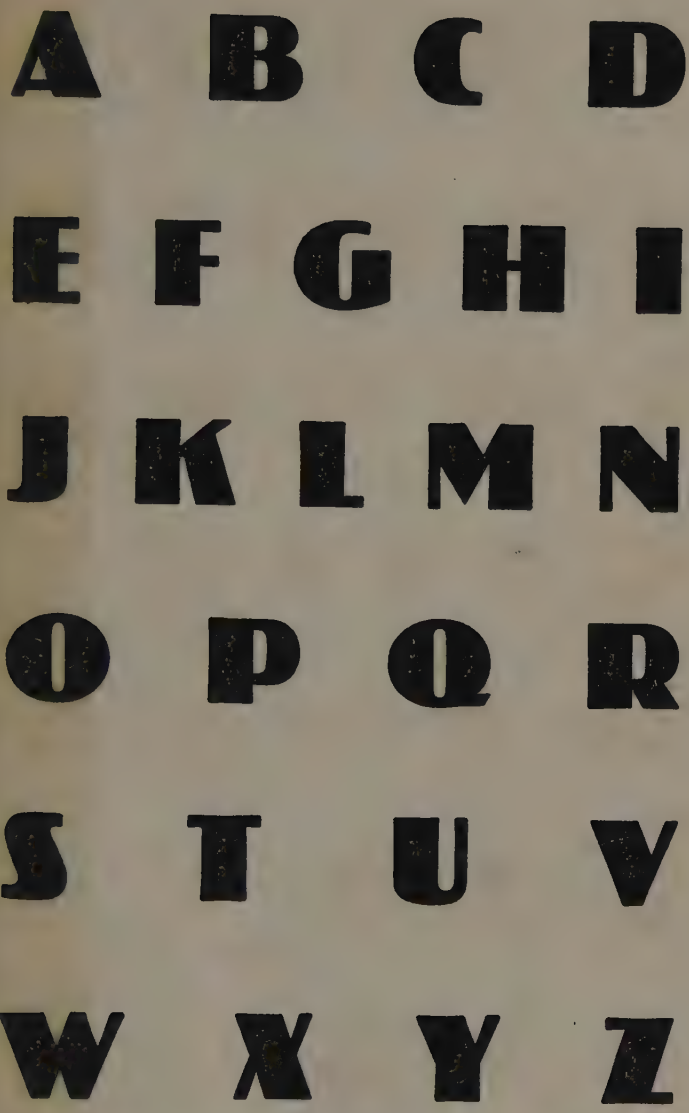
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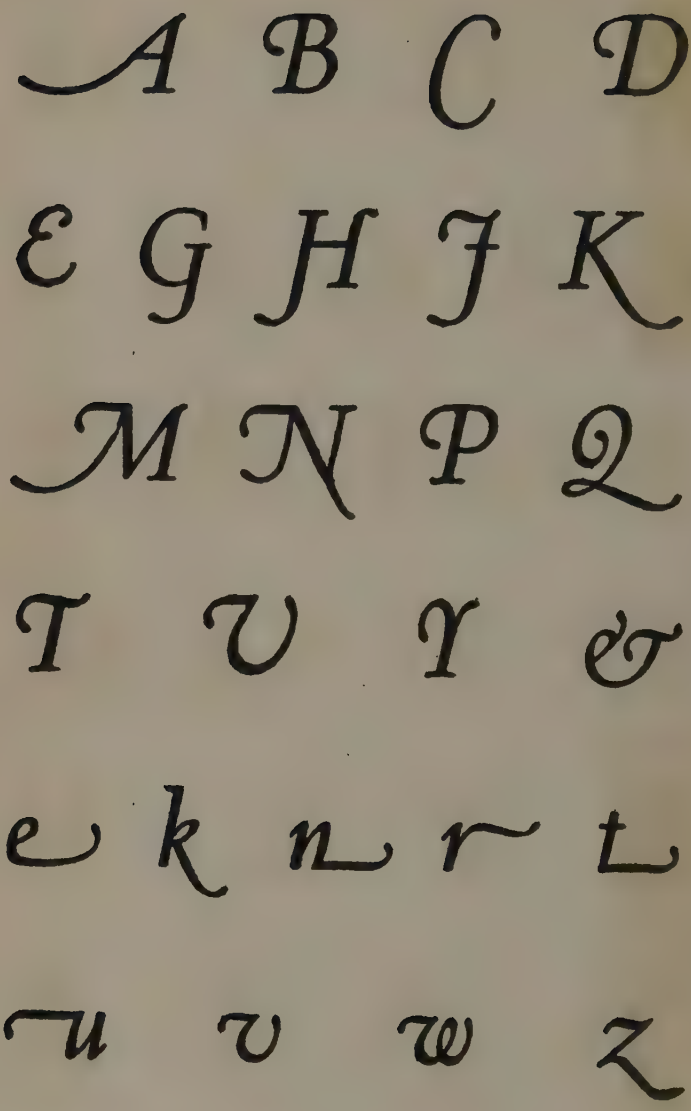

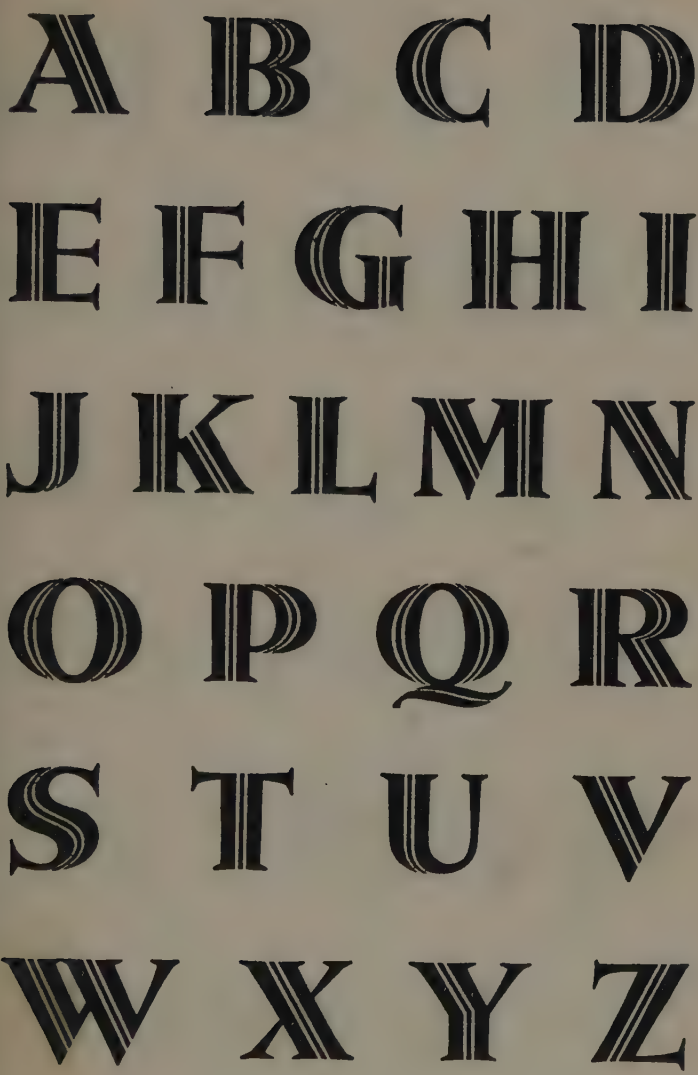
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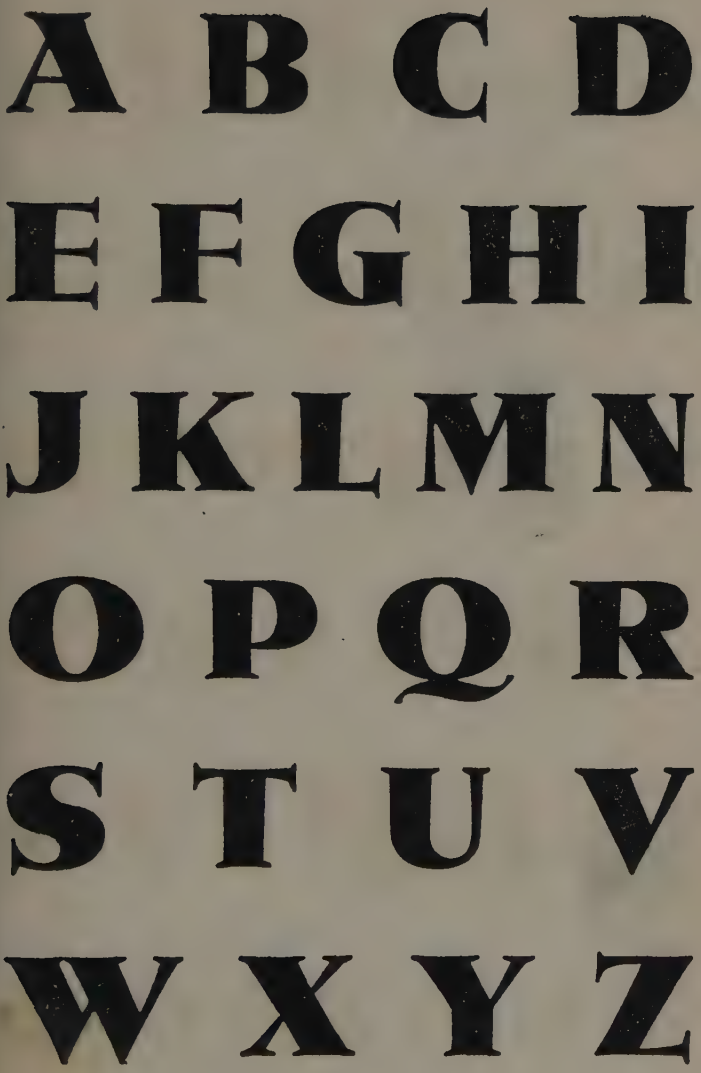
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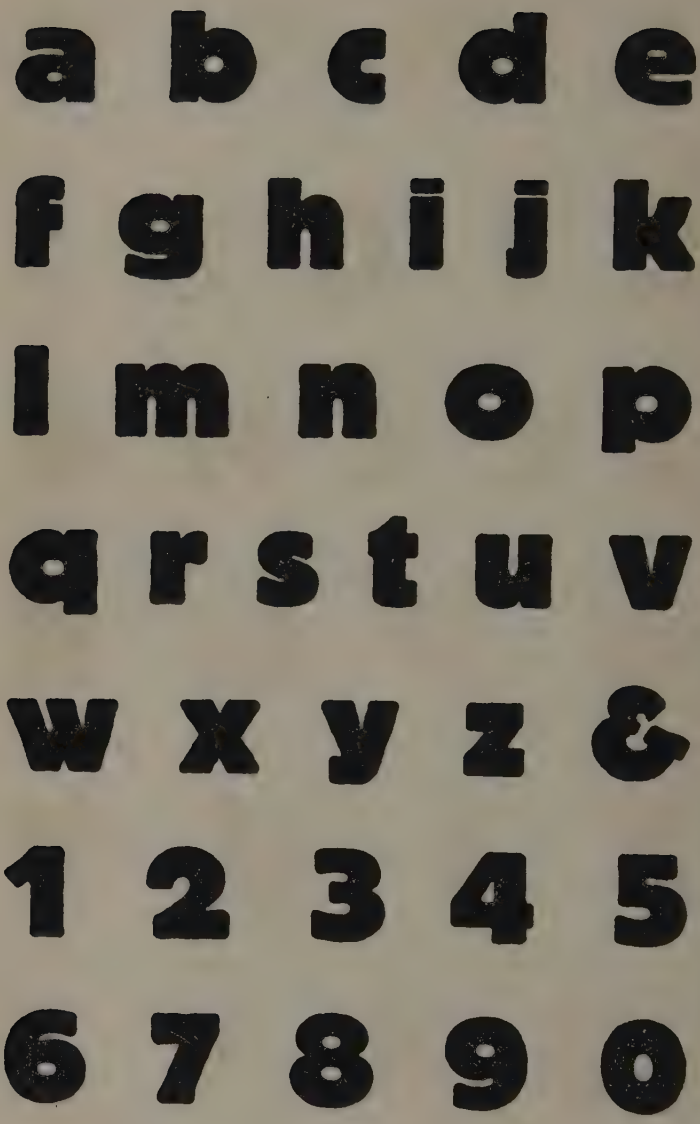
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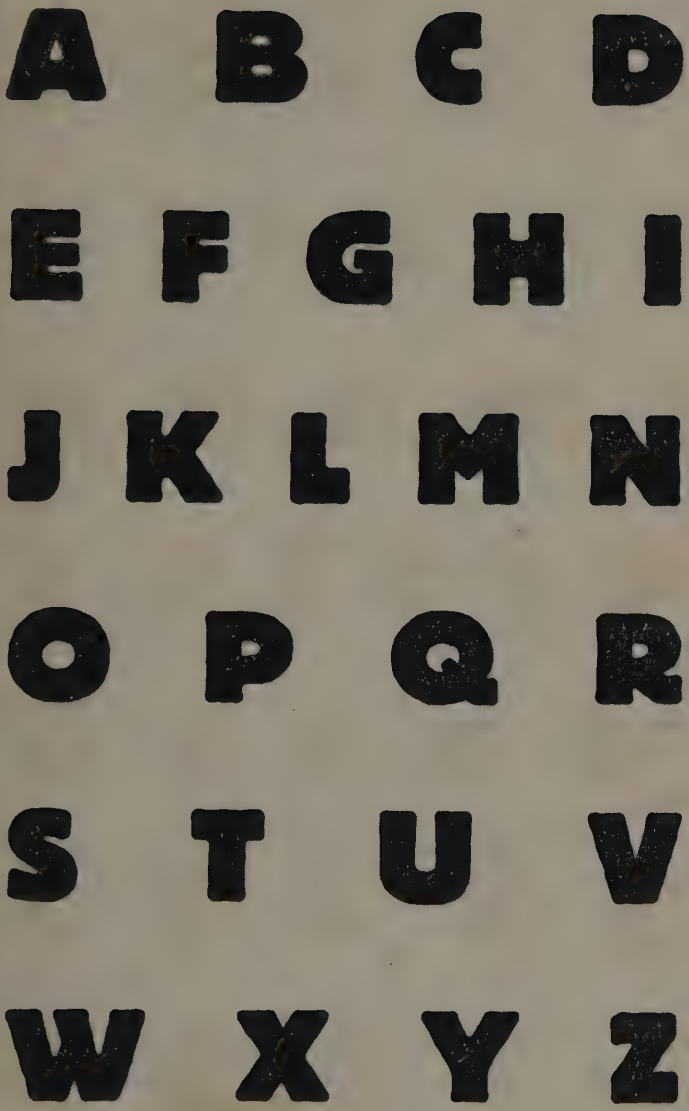
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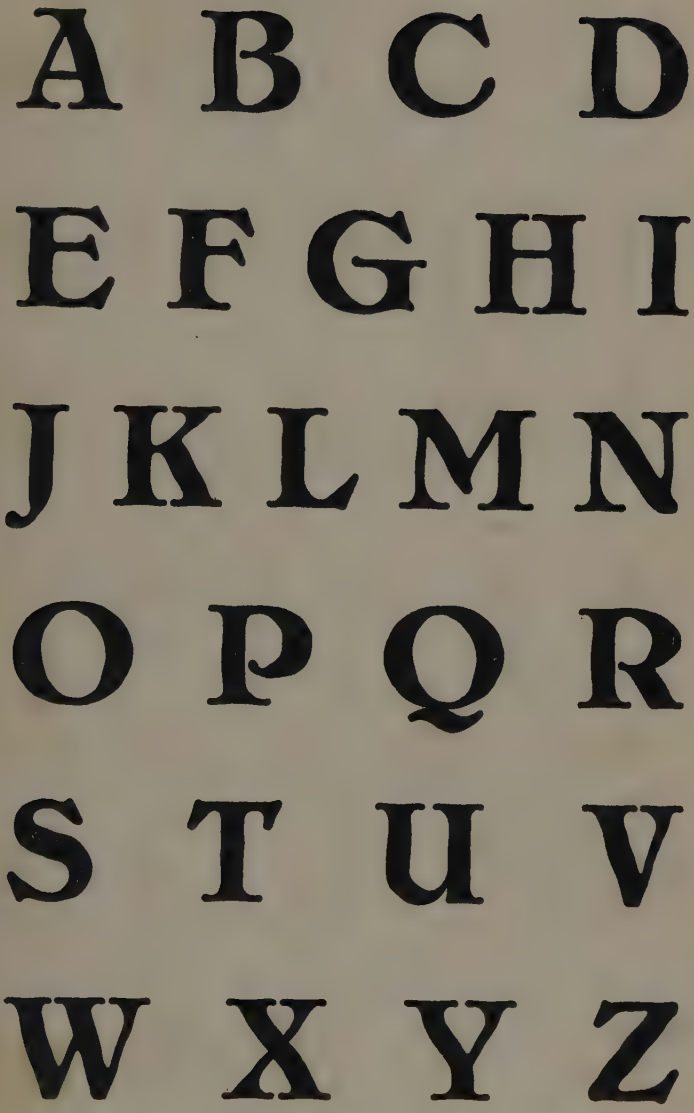
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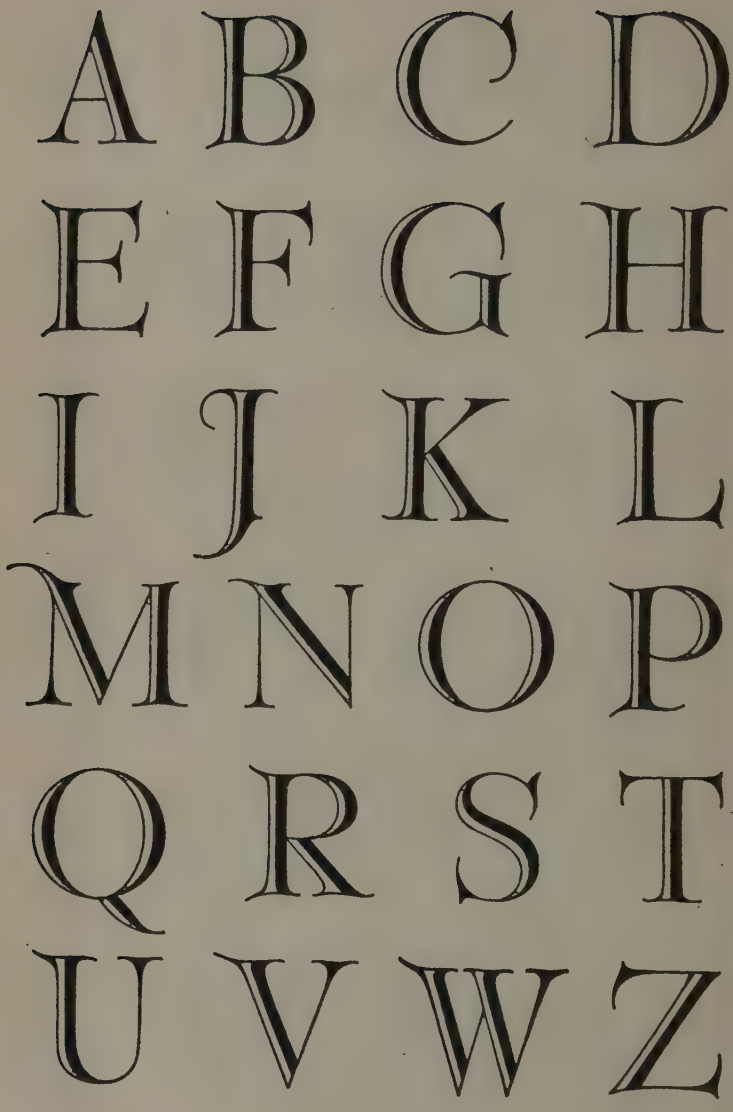
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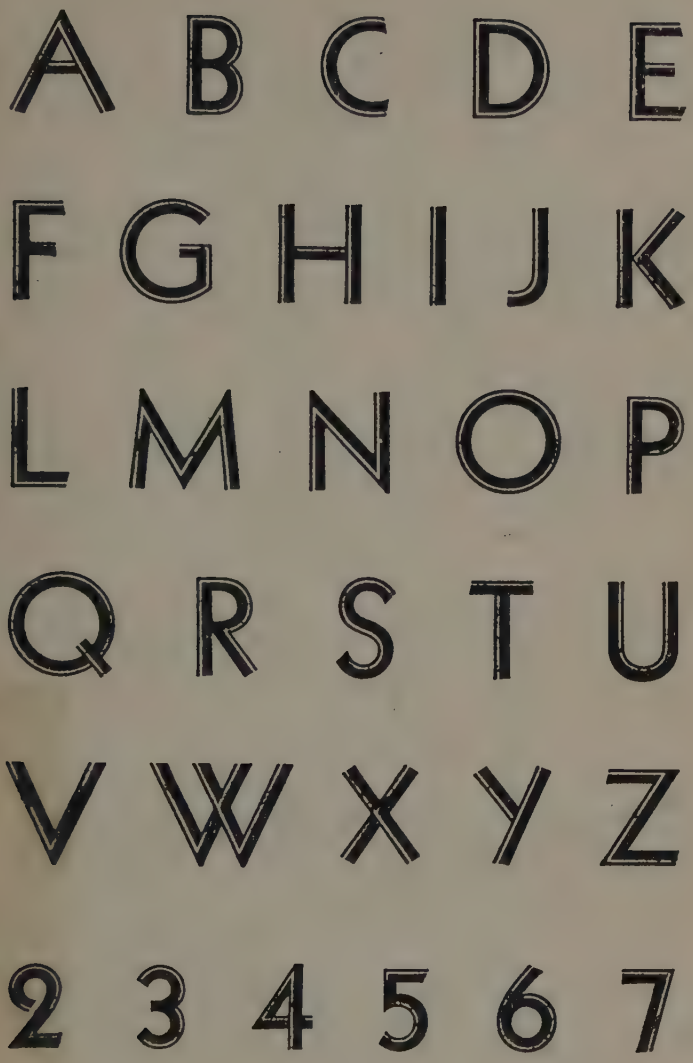
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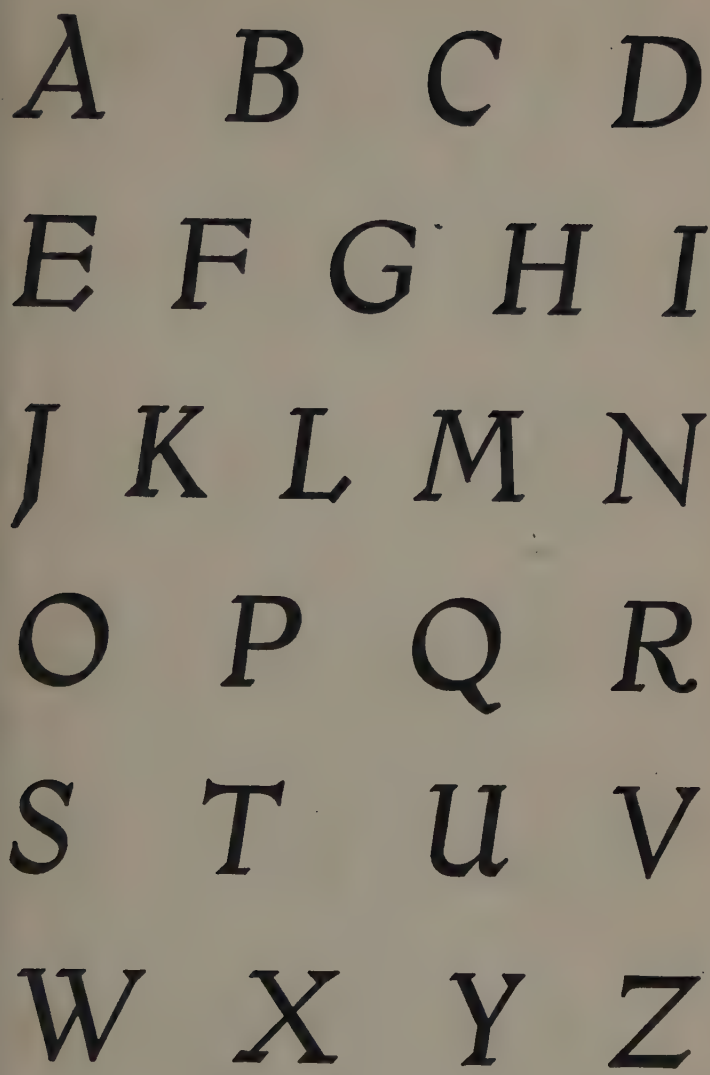
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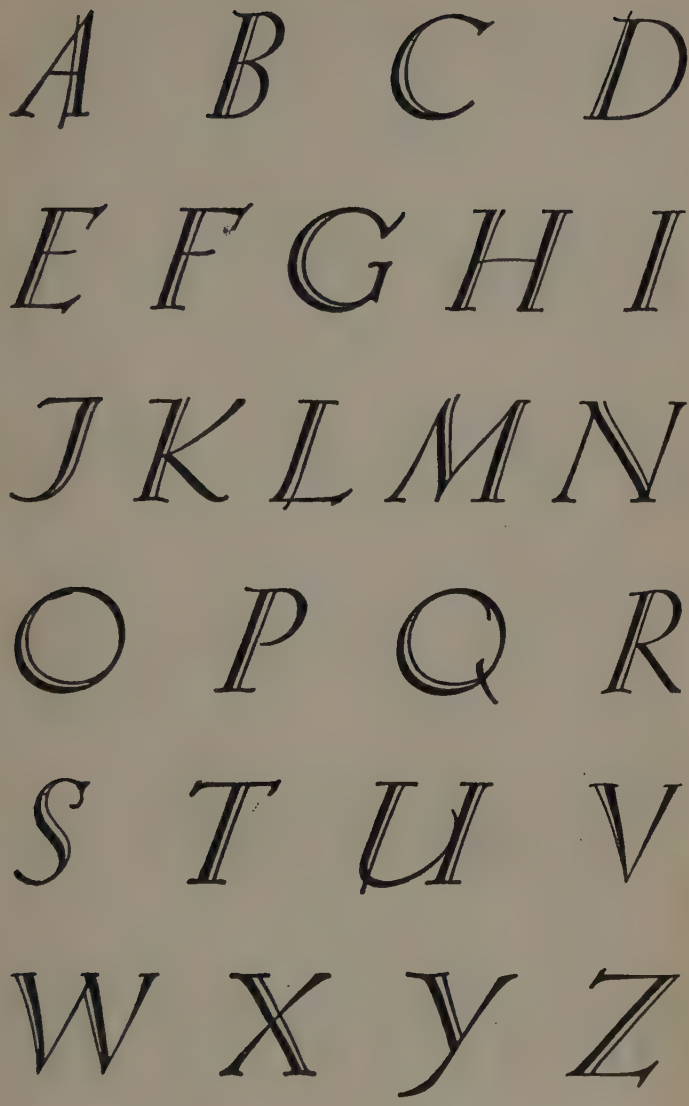
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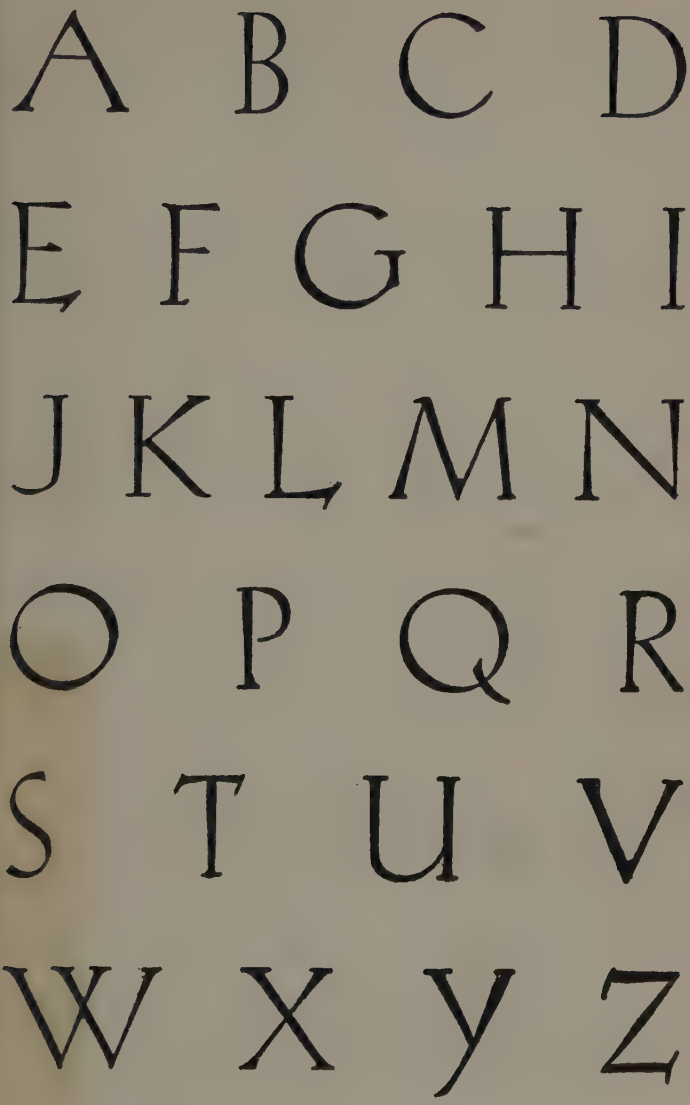
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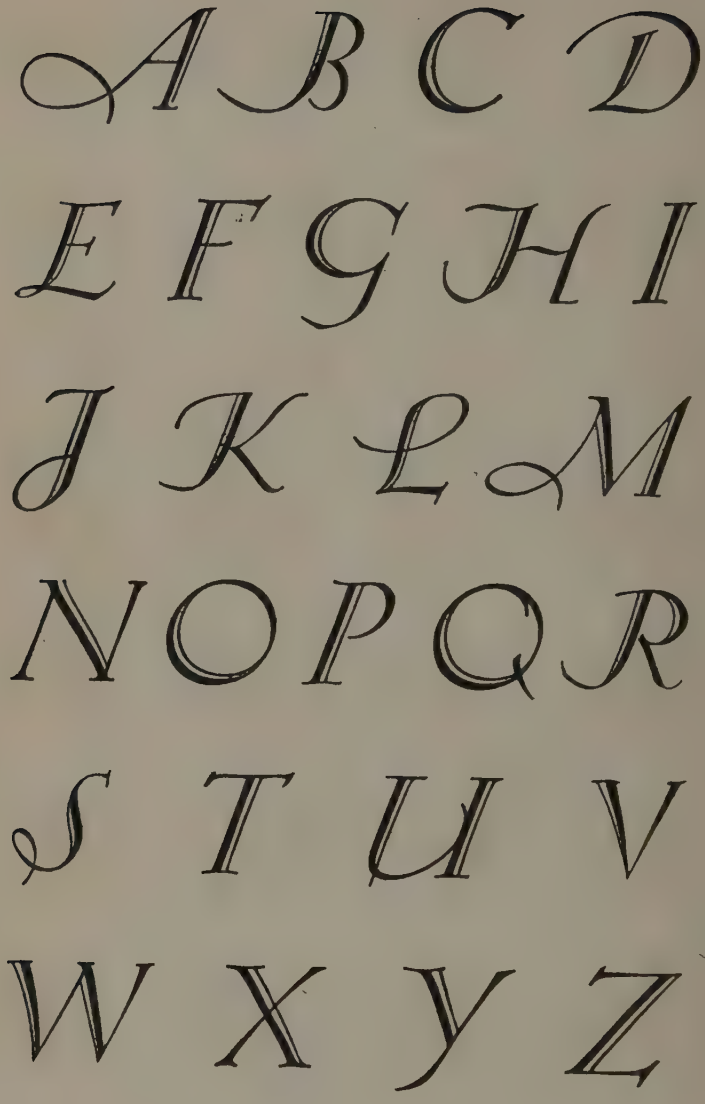

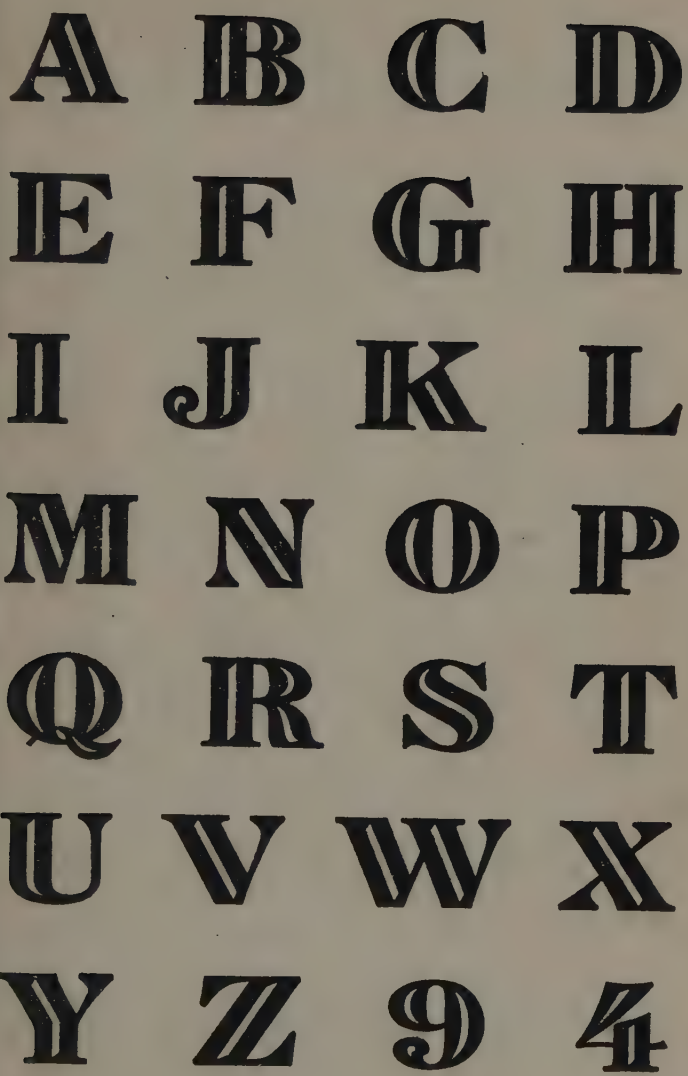
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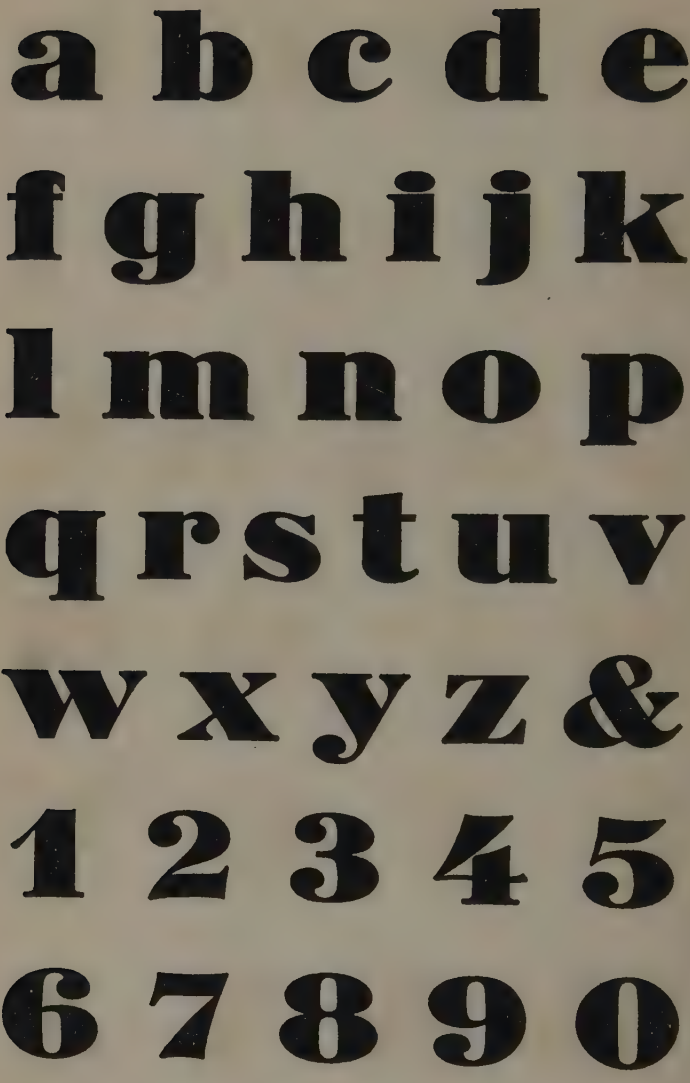
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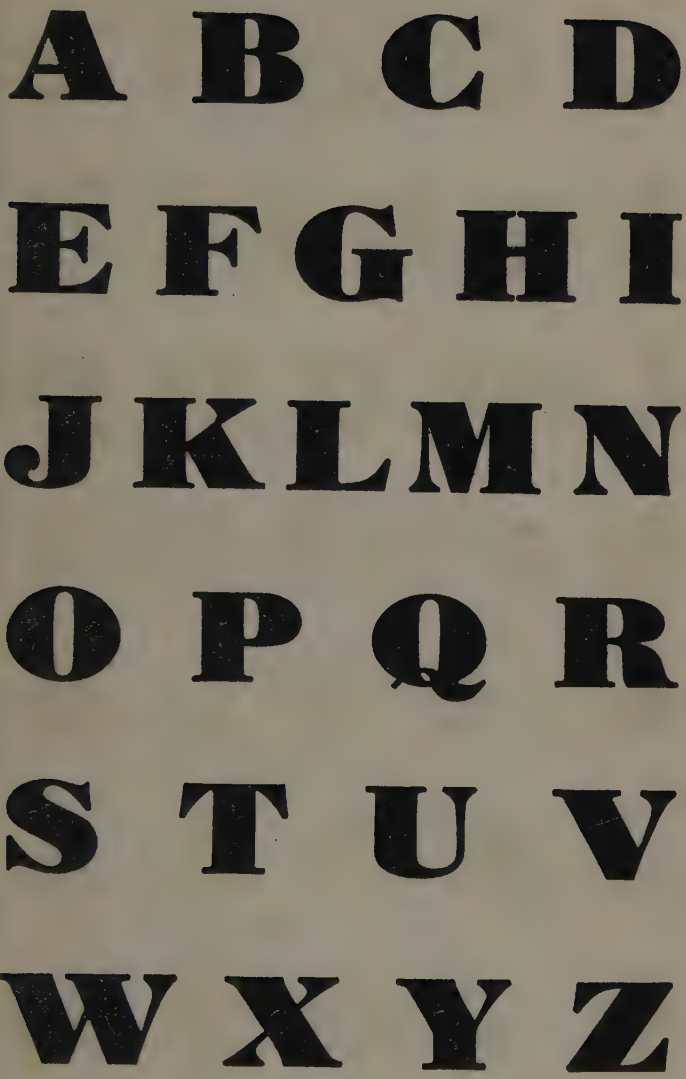
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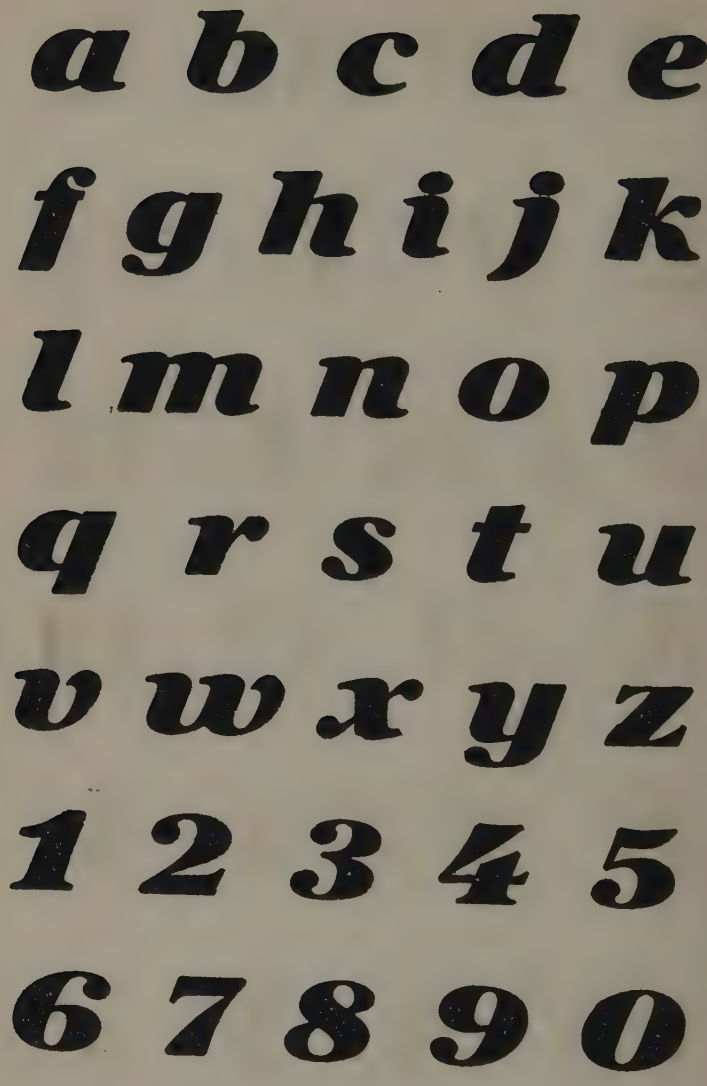
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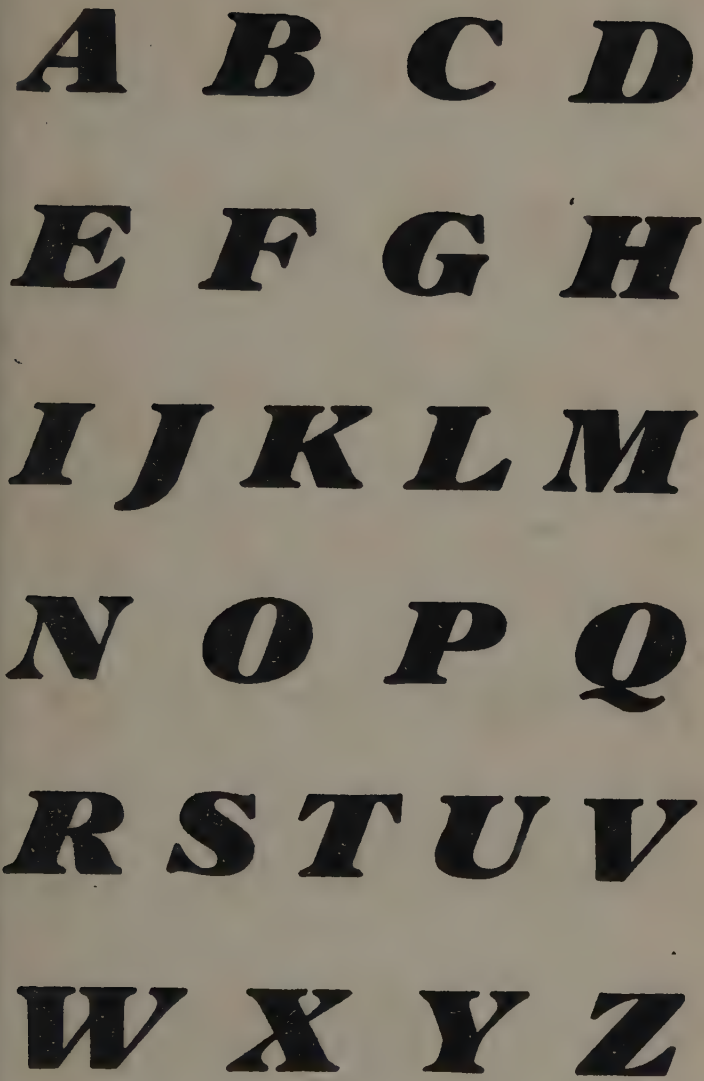
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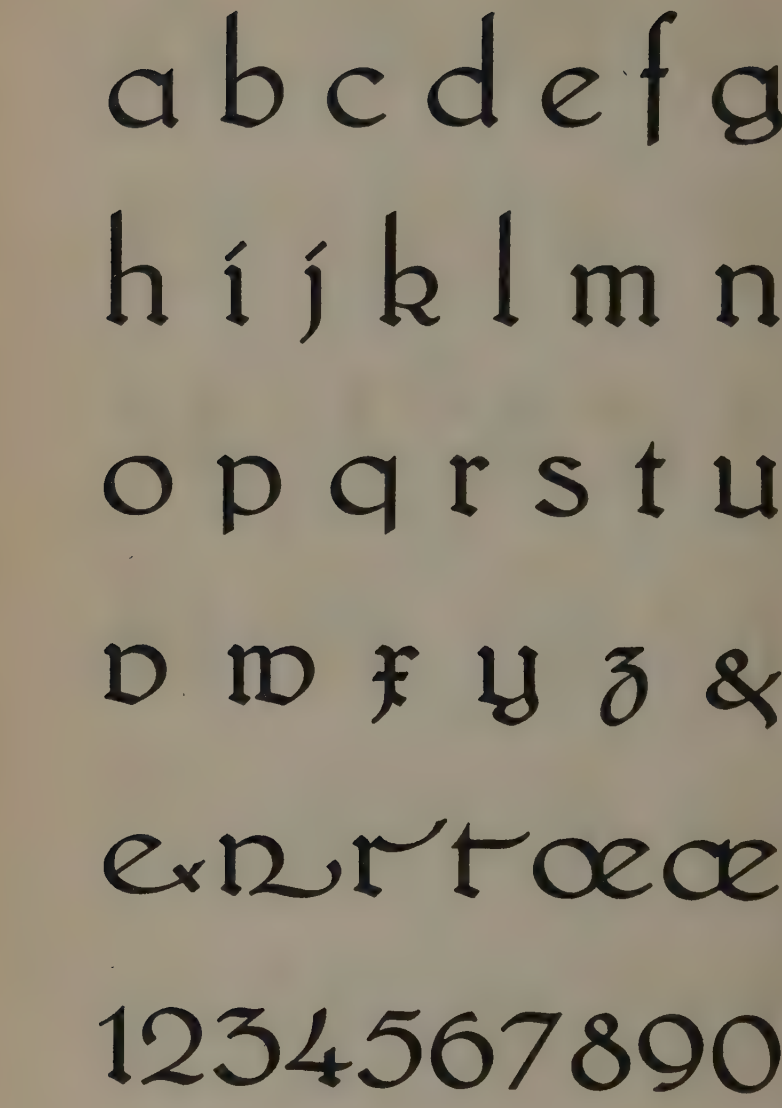
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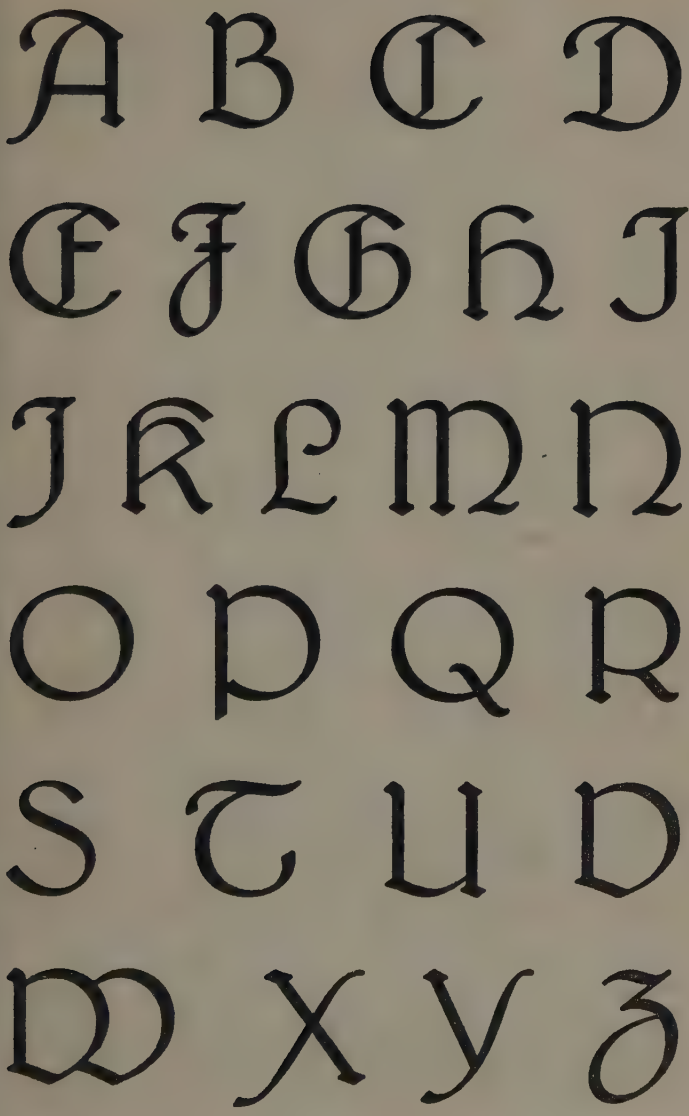
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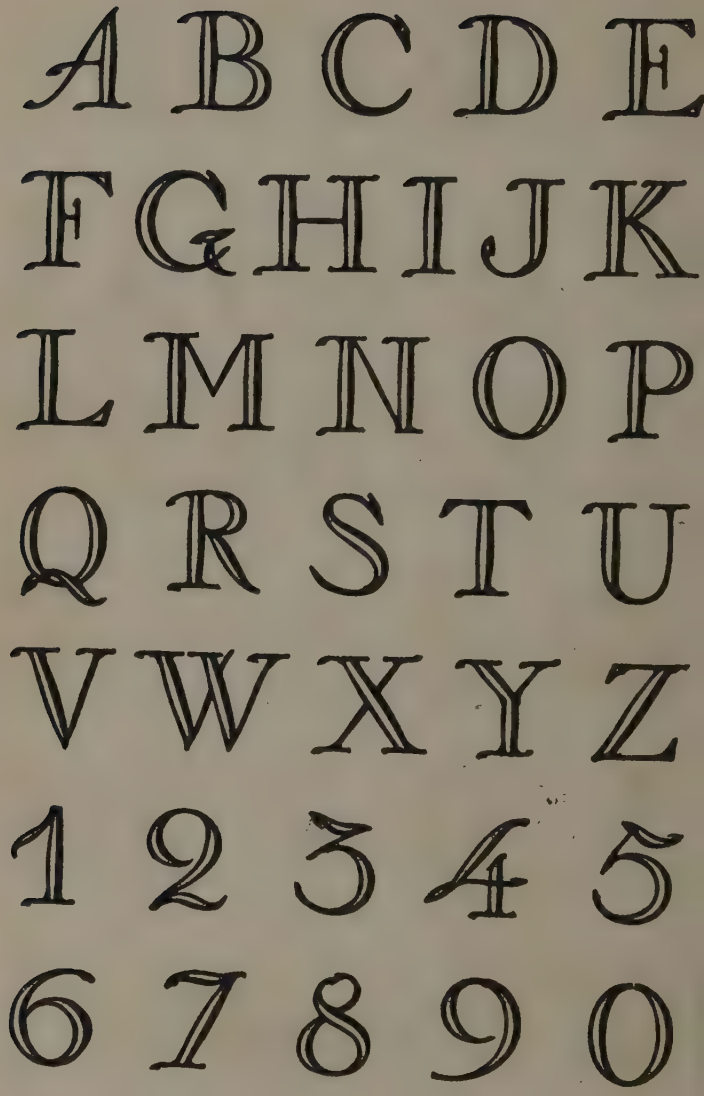
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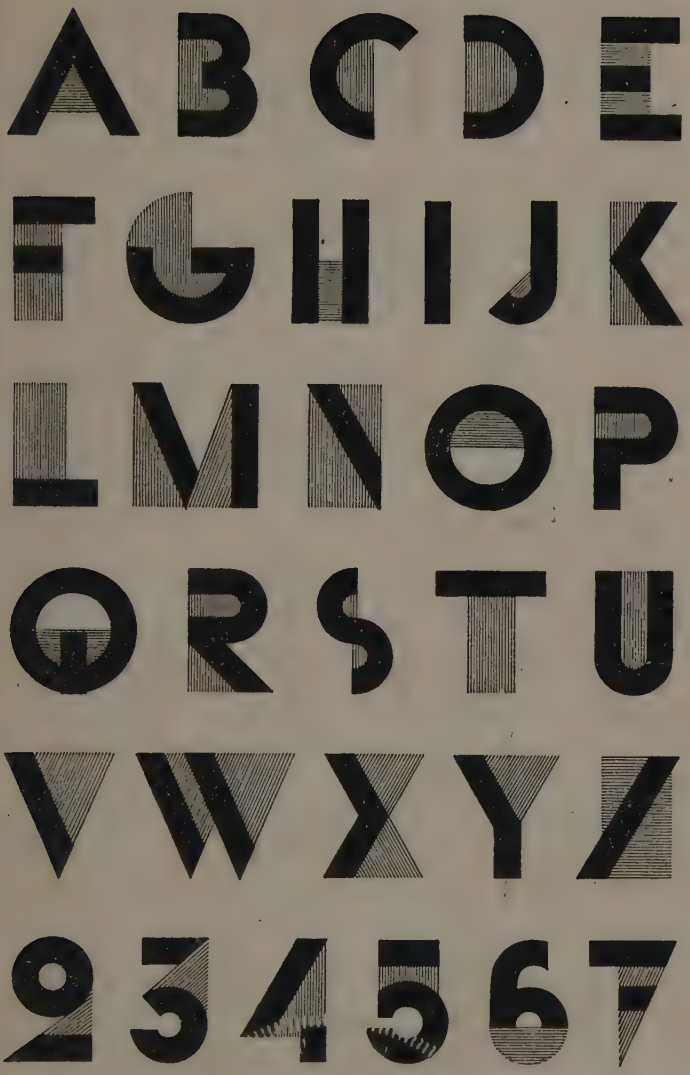
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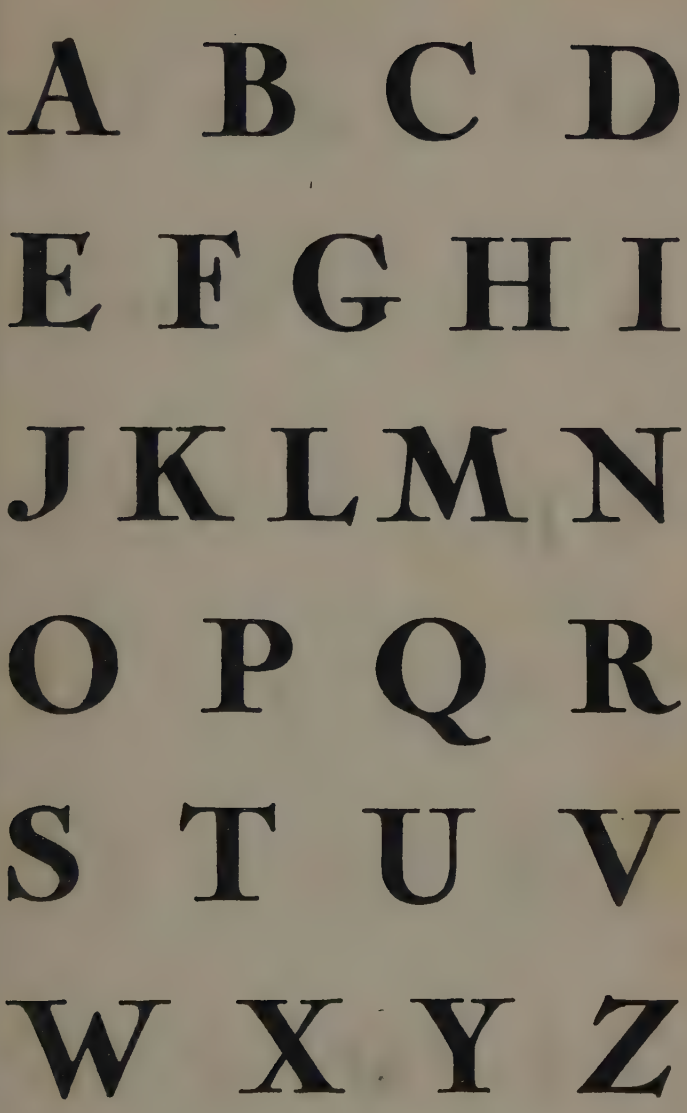
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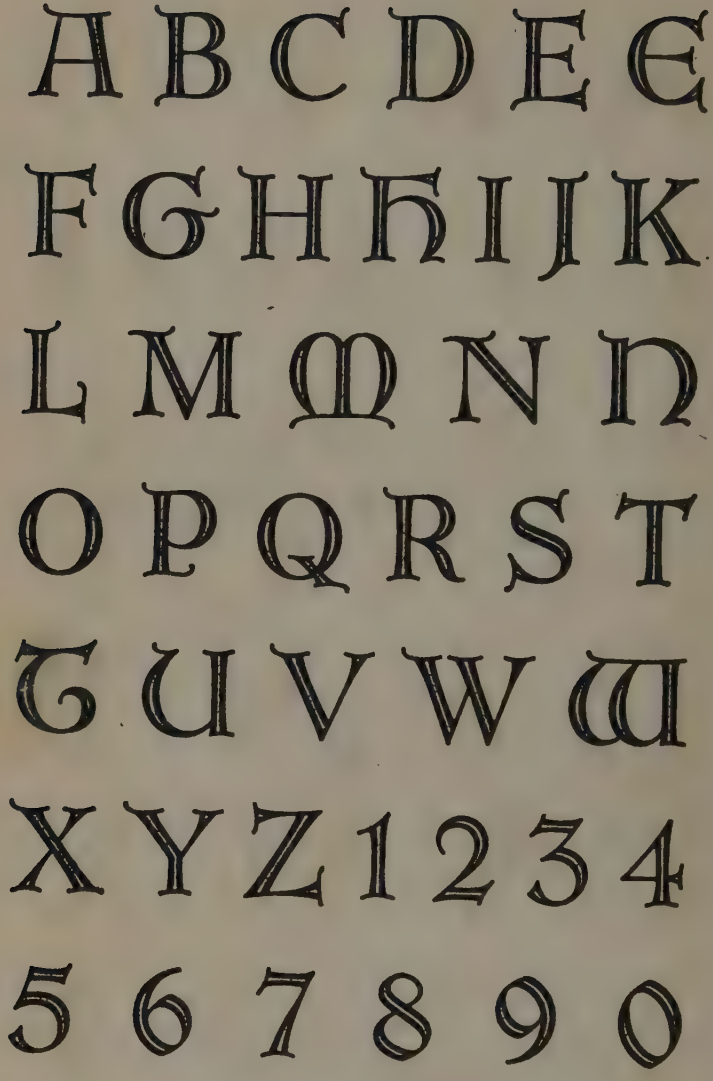
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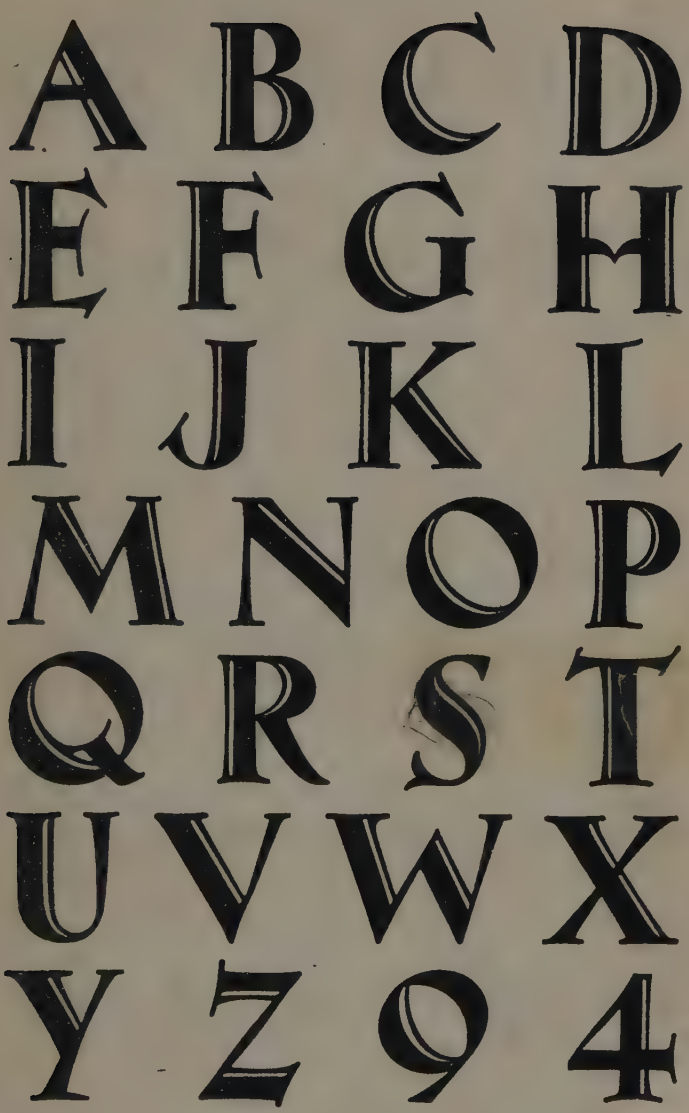
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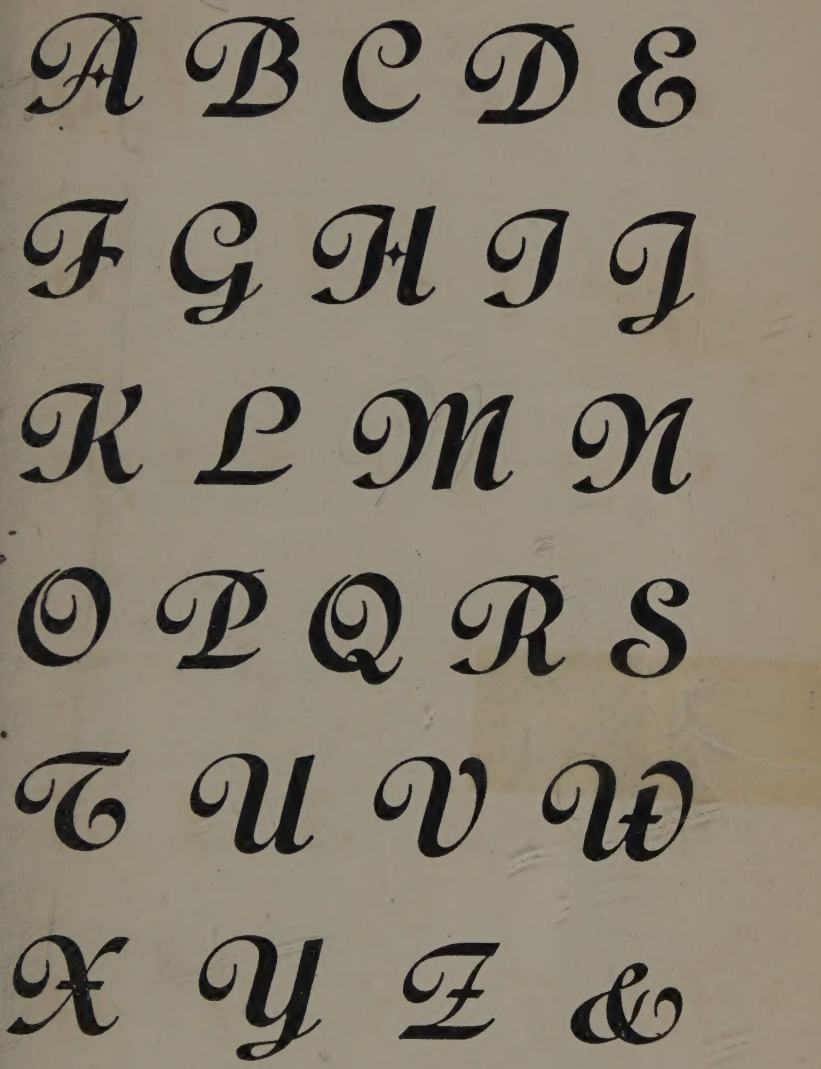

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